


a semiconductor substrate having a substrate surface, a first conductive region and a second conductive region;

a gate oxide disposed on said substrate surface;

a gate disposed on said gate oxide over an area between said first conductive region and said second conductive region and having at least one side wall adjacent at least one of said conductive regions;

a silicon oxide passivation layer disposed on said side wall of said gate; and

an insulating silicon nitride spacer disposed on said silicon oxide passivation layer, said spacer acting as an oxidation barrier;

said gate oxide insulating said gate from said semiconductor substrate and having a thickened area in a region below said side wall of said gate.

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